



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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PROPOSAL WOULD OPEN FISHING AT PATUXENT WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER

Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan announced today that his Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to allow fishing on a lake at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center near Laurel, Maryland, for the first time in 20 years.

"We are pleased to offer anglers in the DC-Baltimore area a new place to wet their lines," said Lujan. "This proposal helps advance the Department's interest in increasing sport fishing opportunities where possible on lands it manages, with special emphasis on those areas close to major metropolitan centers."

Fish and Wildlife Service Director John Turner said, "Opening Patuxent reflects the Service's commitment under the National Recreational Fisheries Policy to improve fisheries quality and quantity on areas managed by the Service. I am particularly pleased that the Patuxent proposal specifically offers the elderly, disadvantaged, and physically challenged the same chance as the general population to get out and have some fun fishing."

Proposed is the opening to 25 anglers per day of 54-acre Cash Lake, which has been closed to fishing since 1957 to allow for fishery and waterfowl studies. With the conclusion of the

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studies and an interest in providing additional sport fish recreation for the public, the Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to open the lake on a limited basis. Fishing in Patuxent's other ponds and lakes has not been permitted since the late 1960's.

Fishing and other recreational activities at Patuxent and other national wildlife refuges are permitted when compatible with the primary purposes for which the unit was established.

Patuxent is the Service's world-famous 4,700-acre wildlife research facility specializing in studies of environmental contaminants, endangered species, and migratory waterfowl. The center's grounds include isolated, protected areas used for maintaining and studying captive populations of endangered species such as the whooping crane. The area also features a number of lakes and ponds supporting a wide variety of fish and wildlife.

If adopted, the rule would allow fishing at Cash Lake for bass, pickerel, sunfish, and catfish. The lake would be open from June 15 through October 15, 6 a.m. to sunset. Anglers would need to obtain a permit from the Service to fish. Maryland fishing regulations, including a state fishing license requirement, with additional restrictions on boating and fishing methods, would apply. Fishermen would be allowed to use boats under 14 feet in length, and canoes under 17 feet. Sailboats, kayaks, and use of gasoline motors would be prohibited.

The proposed rule was published in the November 8, 1990, Federal Register, with a 30-day comment period. Comments may be submitted to Director, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel-Bowie Road, Laurel, MD 20708.